MARVEL COMICS
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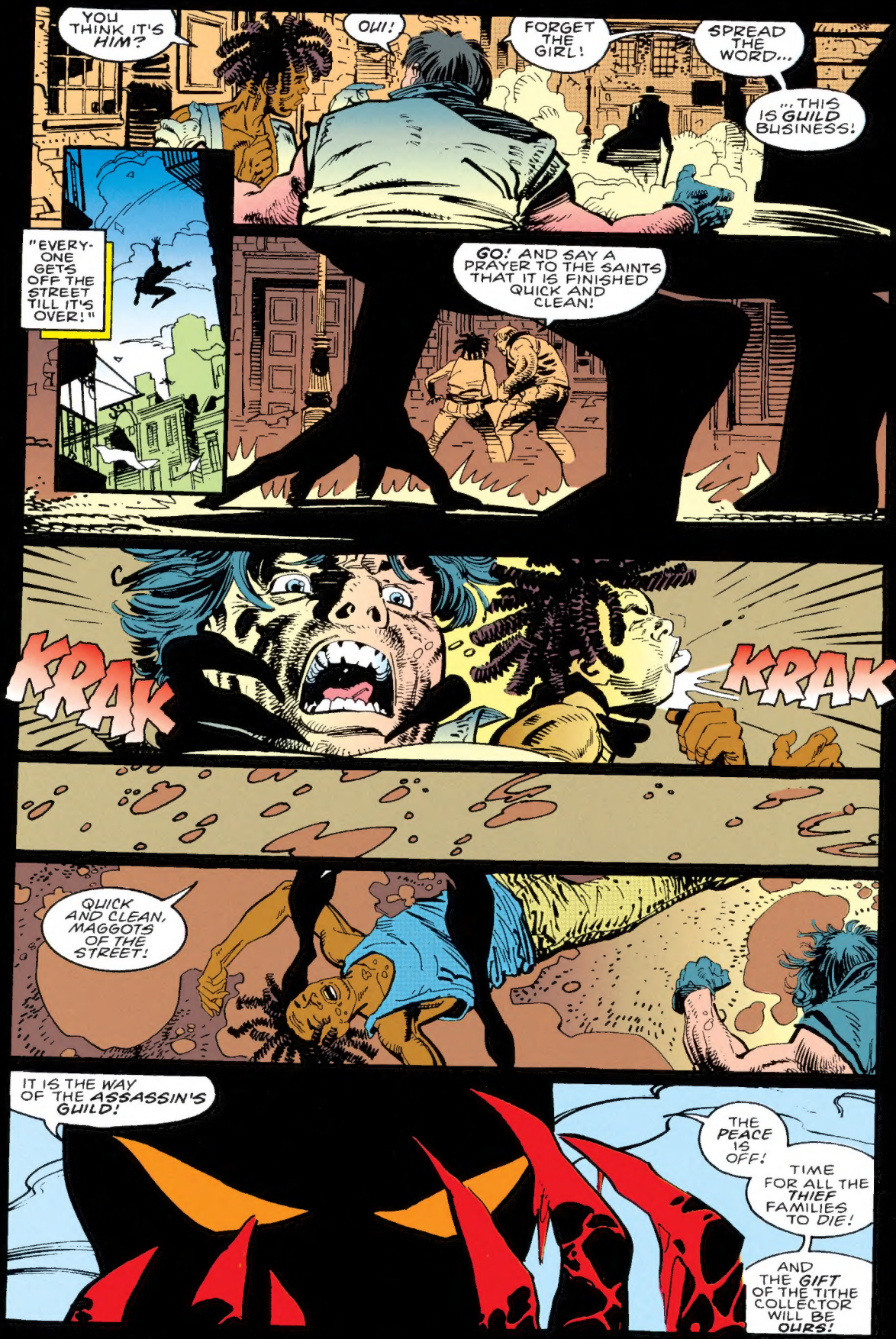
GAMBIT
AT LAST!
THE CAJUN X-MAN IN HIS OWN LIMITED SERIES!

CREOLE MOTHERS IN THE FRENCH QUARTER OF NEW ORLEANS TELL THE STORY OF THE STRANGE, DARK MAN WHO ROLLS IN WITH THE FOG OFF THE MISSISSIPPI ONCE EVERY SEVEN YEARS.
THE LEGEND IS USED TO FRIGHTEN BAD LITTLE CHILDREN.
FEW PEOPLE HAVE EVER ACTUALLY LAID EYES UPON THE STRANGER.
BUT ALL WHO HAVE GROWN UP ON THE STREETS REMEMBER THE TALES, HEARD ON THEIR MOMMA'S KNEES.
TALES OF...
... THE TITHE COLLECTOR.
HE WALKS THE STREETS TRAVELED BY FEW BUT THE MOST FOOLHARDY OF TOURISTS.
FAR AWAY FROM BOURBON STREET AND THE SOUND OF THE JAZZ BANDS.
IT HAS BEEN SEVEN YEARS.
TIME FOR ANOTHER "BUSINESS TRANSACTION."
WOE TO ANY WHO INTERFERE WITH THE TITHING.
"THE TITHE COLLECTOR IS GOIN' GET YOU IF YOU DON'T BE GOOD, CHILD!"
REMEMBER YOUR MOMMA'S WORDS...
... AND LIVE!


YOU THINK IT'S HIM?
OUI!
FORGET THE GIRL!
SPREAD THE WORD...
...THIS IS GUILD BUSINESS!
"EVERY-ONE GETS OFF THE STREET TILL IT'S OVER!"
GO! AND SAY A PRAYER TO THE SAINTS THAT IT IS FINISHED QUICK AND CLEAN!
KRAK
KRAK
QUICK AND CLEAN, MAGGOTS OF THE STREET!
IT IS THE WAY OF THE ASSASSIN'S GUILD!
THE PEACE IS OFF!
TIME FOR ALL THE THIEF FAMILIES TO DIE!
AND THE GIFT OF THE TITHE COLLECTOR WILL BE OURS!

TITHING
HOWARD MACHIE STORY•ART
LEE WEEKS
KLAUS JANSON INKS
BUCCELLATO COLORIST
STARKINGS LETTERER
HARRAS EDITOR
DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF
XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS, WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK.
A LATE NIGHT TRAINING SESSION IN THE X-MEN'S DANGER ROOM.
TWO OF THAT NUMBER, GAMBIT AND ROGUE, ARE BEING PUSHED TO THE FURTHEST LIMIT OF THEIR MUTANT SKILLS.
TENSION IN THE ROOM IS RUNNING HIGH.
GAMBIT CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT AND JIM LEE
ONLY SOME OF IT IS DUE TO THE TRAINING SESSION.

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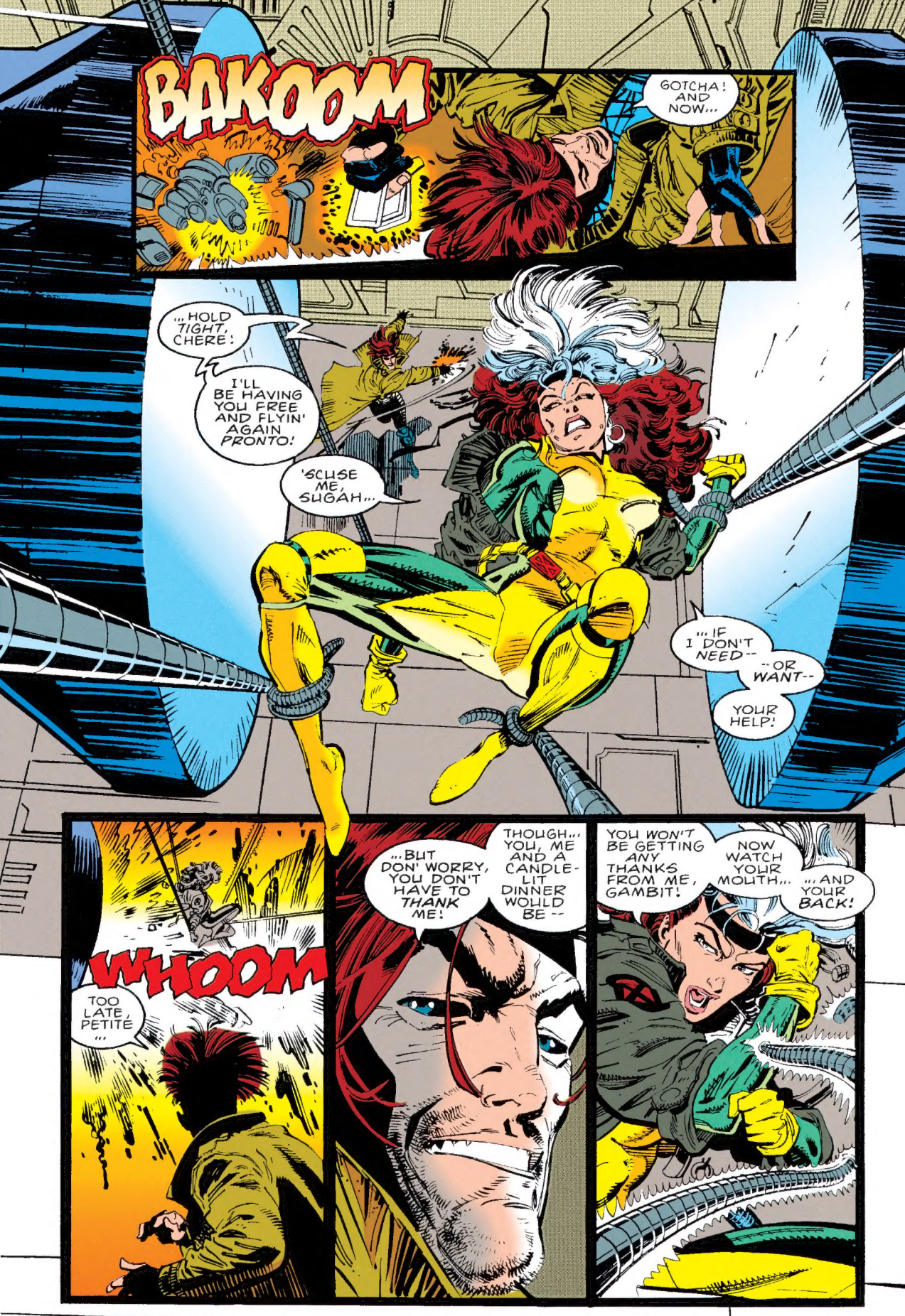
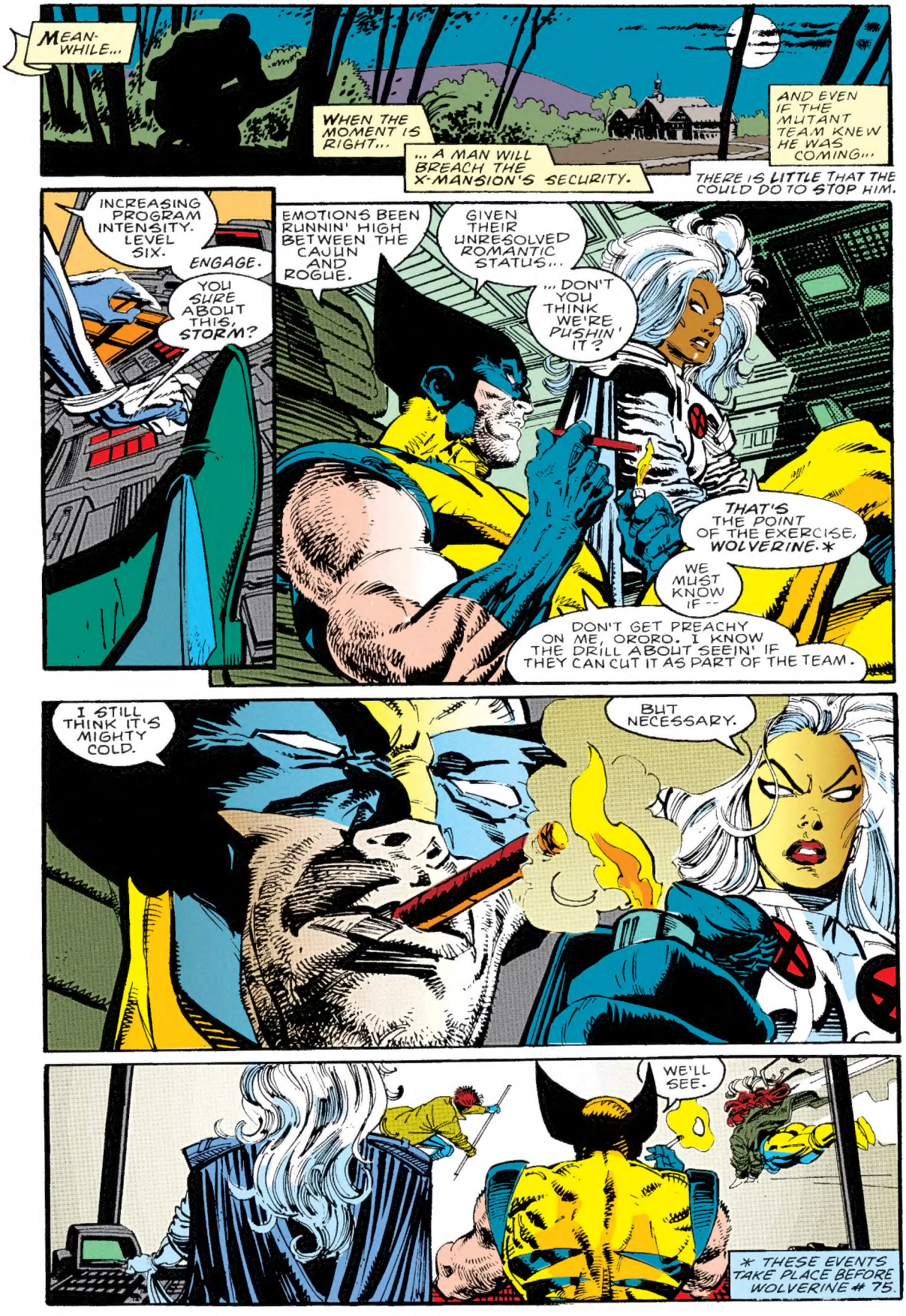
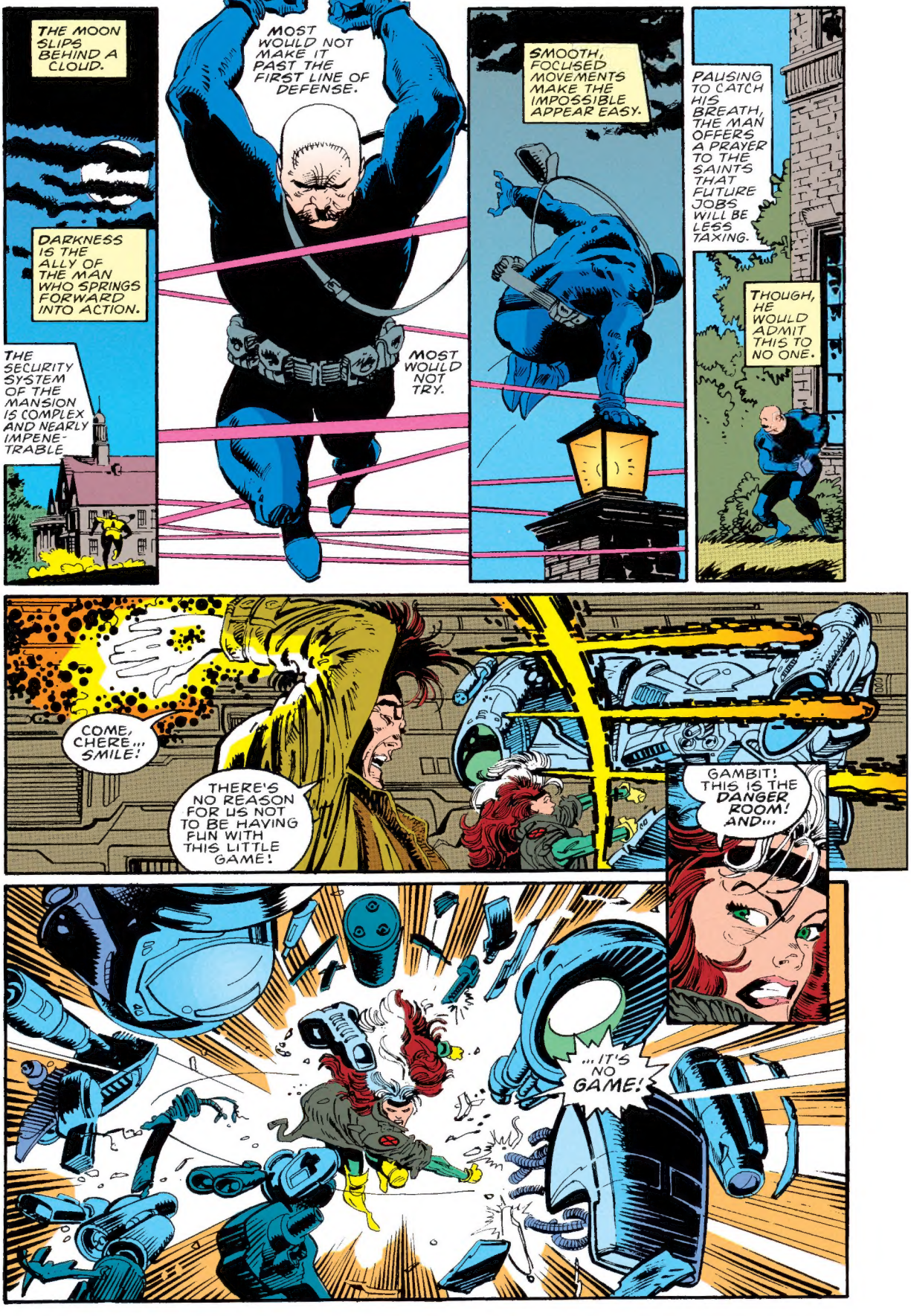
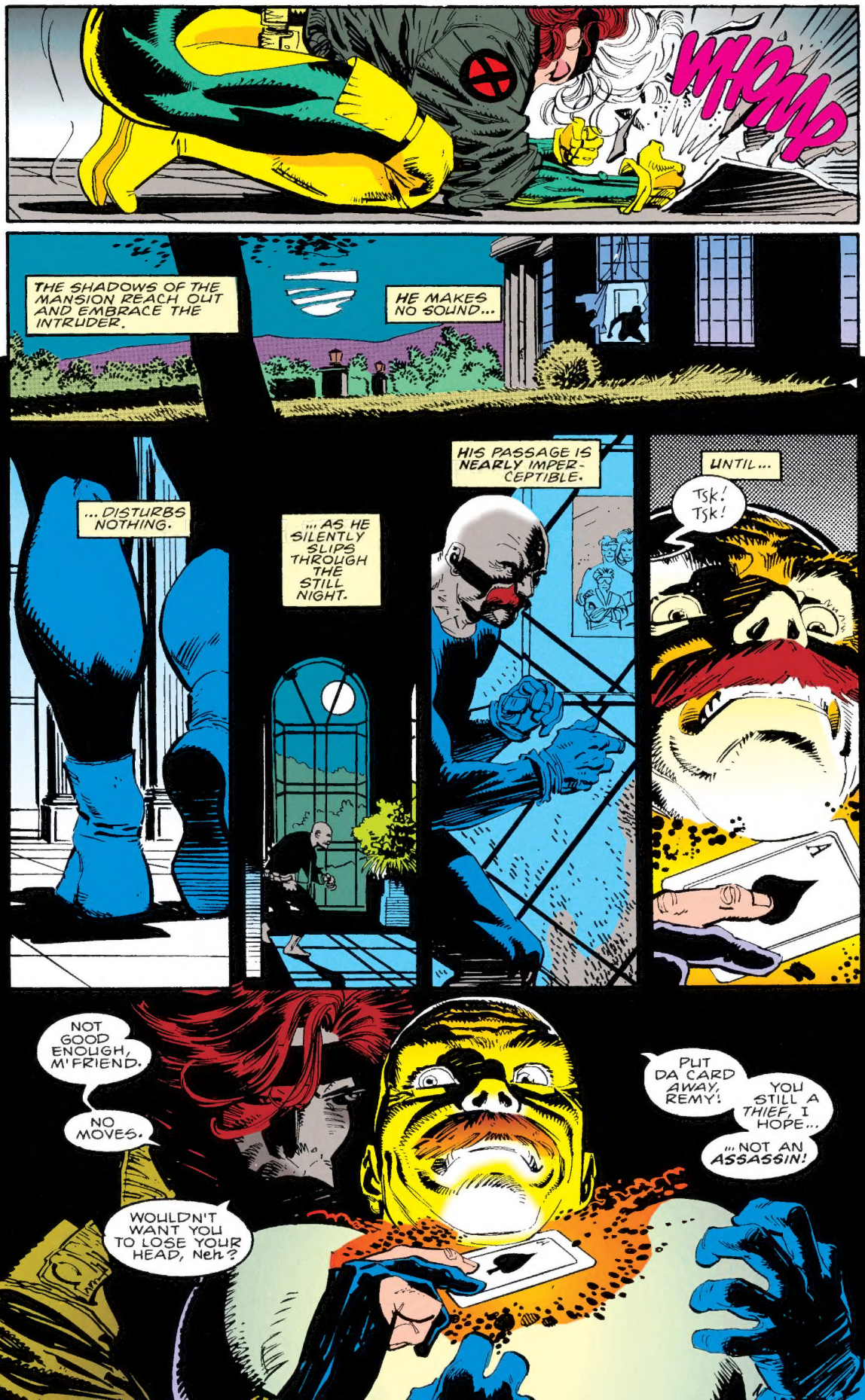

BAKOOM
GOTCHA! AND NOW...
...HOLD TIGHT, CHERE!
I'LL BE HAVING YOU FREE AND FLYIN' AGAIN PRONTO!
'SCUSE ME, SUGAH...
...IF I DON'T NEED--
--OR WANT--
YOUR HELP!
WHOOM
TOO LATE, PETITE...
...BUT DON' WORRY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO THANK ME!
THOUGH... YOU, ME AND A CANDLE-LIT DINNER WOULD BE --
YOU WON'T BE GETTING ANY THANKS FROM ME, GAMBIT!
NOW WATCH YOUR MOUTH...
...AND YOUR BACK!

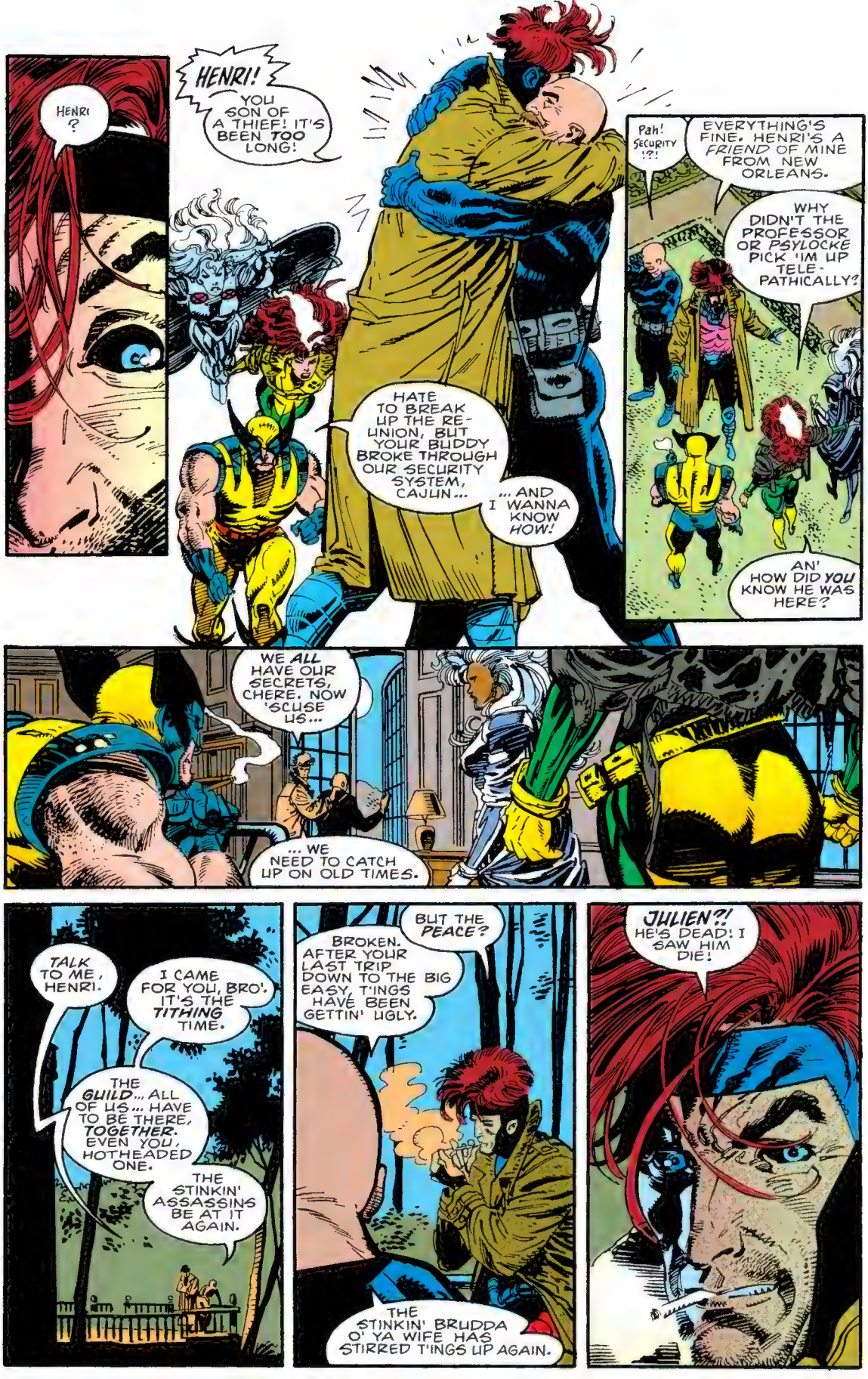

MEAN-WHILE...
WHEN THE MOMENT IS RIGHT...
... A MAN WILL BREACH THE X-MANSION'S SECURITY.
AND EVEN IF THE MUTANT TEAM KNEW HE WAS COMING...
THERE IS LITTLE THAT THE COULD DO TO STOP HIM.
INCREASING PROGRAM INTENSITY. LEVEL SIX.
ENGAGE.
YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, STORM?
EMOTIONS BEEN RUNNIN' HIGH BETWEEN THE CAJUN AND ROGUE.
GIVEN THEIR UNRESOLVED ROMANTIC STATUS...
... DON'T YOU THINK WE'RE PUSHIN' IT?
THAT'S THE POINT OF THE EXERCISE, WOLVERINE.*
WE MUST KNOW IF --
DON'T GET PREACHY ON ME, ORORO. I KNOW THE DRILL ABOUT SEEIN' IF THEY CAN CUT IT AS PART OF THE TEAM.
I STILL THINK IT'S MIGHTY COLD.
BUT NECESSARY.
WE'LL SEE.
* THESE EVENTS TAKE PLACE BEFORE WOLVERINE # 75.


THE MOON SLIPS BEHIND A CLOUD.
DARKNESS IS THE ALLY OF THE MAN WHO SPRINGS FORWARD INTO ACTION.
THE SECURITY SYSTEM OF THE MANSION IS COMPLEX AND NEARLY IMPENE-TRABLE
MOST WOULD NOT MAKE IT PAST THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE.
MOST WOULD NOT TRY.
SMOOTH, FOCUSED MOVEMENTS MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE APPEAR EASY.
PAUSING TO CATCH HIS BREATH, THE MAN OFFERS A PRAYER TO THE SAINTS THAT FUTURE JOBS WILL BE LESS TAXING.
THOUGH, HE WOULD ADMIT THIS TO NO ONE.
COME, CHERE... SMILE!
THERE'S NO REASON FOR US NOT TO BE HAVING FUN WITH THIS LITTLE GAME!
GAMBIT! THIS IS THE DANGER ROOM! AND...
...IT'S NO GAME!

Pah! YOU ARE TOO SERIOUS!
LIFE IS A GAME!
AND, IF YOU GIVE ME THE TIME...
...AND THE OPPORTUNITY...
...I'LL SHOW YOU...
...YOU...
GAMBIT! INCOMING! BEHIND YOU!
GAMBIT!
REMY!
SOMETHING HAS GONE WRONG. I AM INITIALIZING TERMINATION SEQUENCE--
NOT SO FAST, DARLIN'.
YOU WANTED TO SEE HOW THEY OPERATE UNDER COMBAT CONDITIONS...

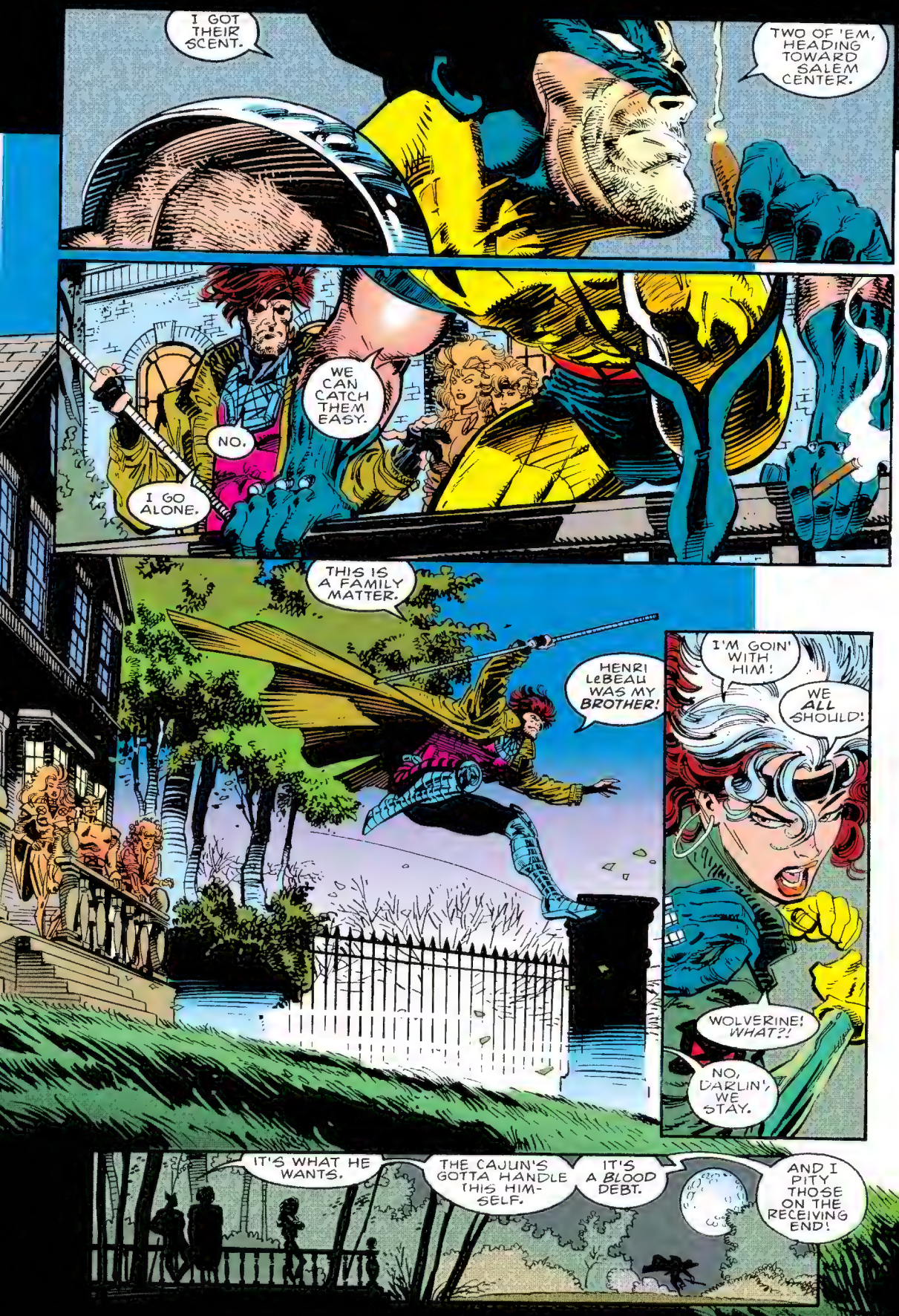
"... LET IT PLAY. THEY CAN HANDLE IT."
FWAKOOM
SEQUENCE END.
TOLD YA.
NOW ISN'T THIS A COZY LITTLE TÊTE À TÊTE, CHERE?
LOVE TO STAY HERE ALL DAY, BUT...
... IT'LL HAVE TO BE 'NOTHER TIME
WE GOT COMPANY.
GAMBIT, WHAT..?


WHOMP
THE SHADOWS OF THE MANSION REACH OUT AND EMBRACE THE INTRUDER.
HE MAKES NO SOUND...
... DISTURBS NOTHING.
... AS HE SILENTLY SLIPS THROUGH THE STILL NIGHT.
HIS PASSAGE IS NEARLY IMPER-CEPTIBLE.
UNTIL...
TSK! TSK!
NOT GOOD ENOUGH, M'FRIEND.
NO MOVES.
WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO LOSE YOUR HEAD, NEH?
PUT DA CARD AWAY, REMY!
YOU STILL A THIEF, I HOPE...
... NOT AN ASSASSIN!

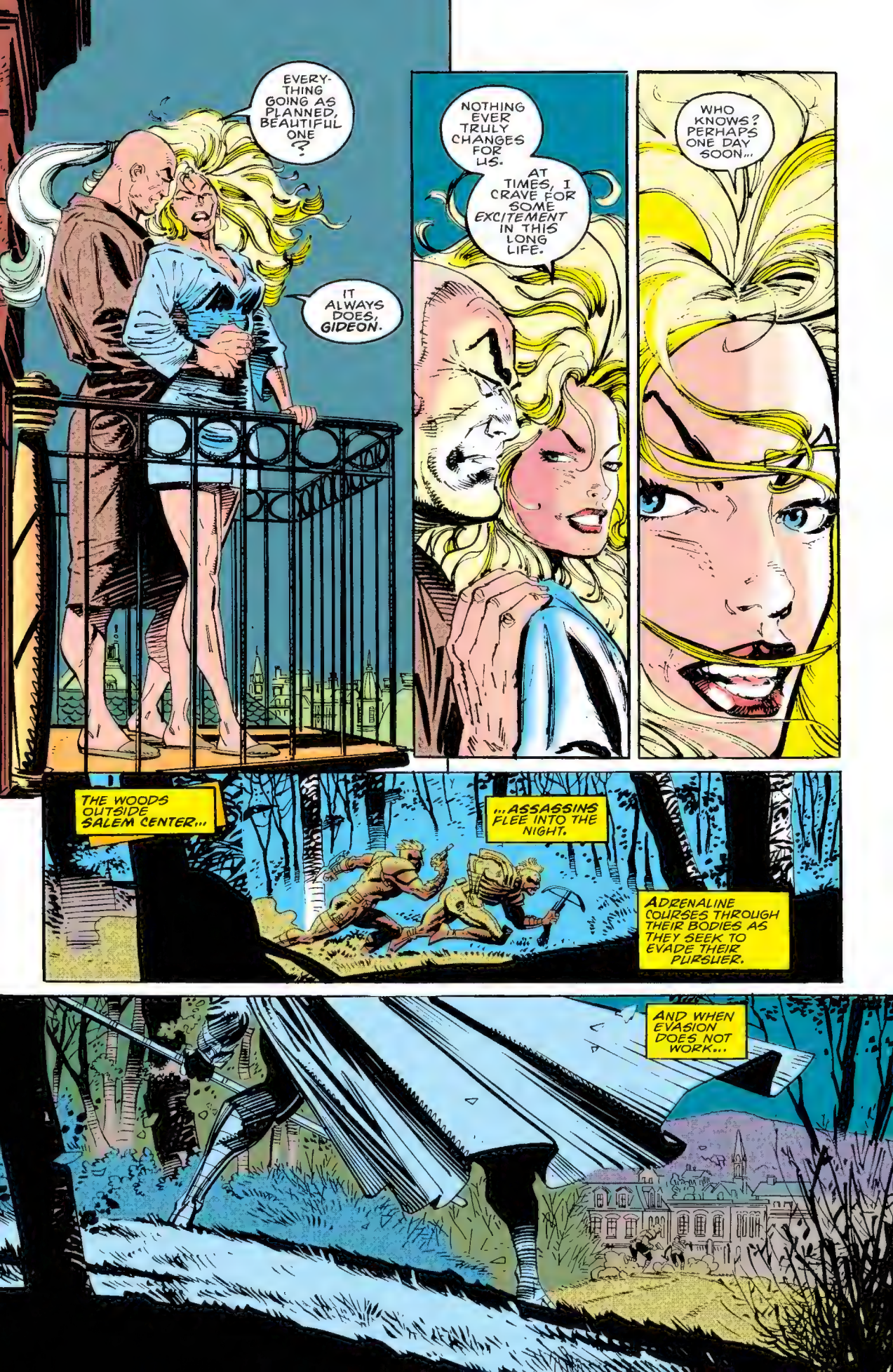

HENRI?
HENRI!
YOU SON OF A THIEF! IT'S BEEN TOO LONG!
HATE TO BREAK UP THE RE-UNION, BUT YOUR BUDDY BROKE THROUGH OUR SECURITY SYSTEM, CAJUN...
...AND I WANNA KNOW HOW!
Pah! SECURITY!?!
EVERYTHING'S FINE. HENRI'S A FRIEND OF MINE FROM NEW ORLEANS.
WHY DIDN'T THE PROFESSOR OR PSYLOCKE PICK 'IM UP TELE-PATHICALLY?
AN' HOW DID YOU KNOW HE WAS HERE?
WE ALL HAVE OUR SECRETS, CHERE. NOW 'SCUSE US...
...WE NEED TO CATCH UP ON OLD TIMES.
TALK TO ME, HENRI.
I CAME FOR YOU, BRO'. IT'S THE TITHING TIME.
THE GUILD... ALL OF US... HAVE TO BE THERE, TOGETHER. EVEN YOU, HOTHEADED ONE.
THE STINKIN' ASSASSINS BE AT IT AGAIN.
BUT THE PEACE?
BROKEN. AFTER YOUR LAST TRIP DOWN TO THE BIG EASY, T'INGS HAVE BEEN GETTIN' UGLY.
THE STINKIN' BRUDDA O' YA WIFE HAS STIRRED T'INGS UP AGAIN.
JULIEN?!
HE'S DEAD! I SAW HIM DIE!

NOT ALL T'INGS ARE AS DEY SEEM, BRO'.
YOU KNOW DAT!
COME HOME, REMY. IT'S FAMILY. AIN'T NOTHIN' MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT!
FWOOSH
HENRI!
IT'S THEM, REMY... THE ASSASSIN'S GUILD...
...THEY DON'T WANT THE TITHING TO TAKE PLACE...
YOU'RE NEEDED. YOU KNOW DERE WAYS... DON'T LET DEM GET IT... IT'S OURS...
WE'VE EARNED IT... USE WHAT YOU KNOW... FIND OUT WHAT YOU DON'T!

WHAT I KNEW OF THE ASSASSINS DIED WITH BELLA DONNA, HENRI.
I'M SORRY.
NOT ALL T'INGS ARE AS DEY SEEM, BRO'.
GO SEE FOR YOURSELF...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HENRI? WHAT ABOUT BELL--
TAKE ME... HOME, REMY...
...TAKE ME TO OUR FATHER...
YES... BROTHER.


I GOT THEIR SCENT.
TWO OF 'EM, HEADING TOWARD SALEM CENTER.
WE CAN CATCH THEM EASY.
NO.
I GO ALONE.
THIS IS A FAMILY MATTER.
HENRI LeBEAU WAS MY BROTHER!
I'M GOIN' WITH HIM!
WE ALL SHOULD!
WOLVERINE! WHAT?!
NO, DARLIN', WE STAY.
IT'S WHAT HE WANTS.
THE CAJUN'S GOTTA HANDLE THIS HIM-SELF.
IT'S A BLOOD DEBT.
AND I PITY THOSE ON THE RECEIVING END!

NEW ORLEANS.
IN A CHAMBER, FAR BELOW THE DARK COBBLE-STONE STREETS OF THE FRENCH QUARTER...
...THE HIGH COUNCIL OF THE THIEVES GUILD GATHER AND MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR COMING EVENTS.
THE TITHE COLLECTOR OF OUR BENEFACTRESS WILL SOON ARRIVE. THE CEREMONY WILL COMMENCE TOMORROW.
ALL OUR FAMILIES HAVE BEEN SENT WORD TO RETURN WITH THEIR TRIBUTE.
FOR SOME, IT WILL BE THE FIRST TASTING OF THE ELIXIR.
I PROPOSE THAT REMY LEBEAU BE PERMITTED TO ACCEPT IT THIS YEAR.
NO DISRESPECT, JEAN-LUC, BUT REMY?
HE IS YOUNG, BRASH, IMPULSIVE AND NOT TRULY ONE OF OURS.
LET US SEE IF HE EVEN HAS THE COURTESY TO HONOR HIS FAMILY WITH HIS PRESENCE.
LET US SEE.
PARIS, FRANCE...
THE WOMAN NAMED CANDRA GAZES OUT UPON THE CITY OF LIGHTS.
IN HER LONG LIFE, SHE HAS SEEN MANY NEW LIGHTS ADDED TO THE PARISIAN SKYLINE.
FOR SHE IS MUTANT WITH THE ADDITIONAL GIFT OF LONG LIFE.
SHE IS AN EXTERNAL.


EVERY-THING GOING AS PLANNED, BEAUTIFUL ONE?
IT ALWAYS DOES, GIDEON.
NOTHING EVER TRULY CHANGES FOR US.
AT TIMES, I CRAVE FOR SOME EXCITEMENT IN THIS LONG LIFE.
WHO KNOWS? PERHAPS ONE DAY SOON...
THE WOODS OUTSIDE SALEM CENTER...
...ASSASSINS FLEE INTO THE NIGHT.
ADRENALINE COURSES THROUGH THEIR BODIES AS THEY SEEK TO EVADE THEIR PURSUER.
AND WHEN EVASION DOES NOT WORK...

...THEY TURN AND FIGHT.
YOU WILL DIE, T'IEF!
I WON'T BE DYING UNTIL I GET ANSWERS!
FRAKOOM
NO.
MY BROTHER HAD HIS LIFE STOLEN BY YOU, ASSASSIN!
YOU HAVE BROKEN A PEACE I SACRIFICED MUCH TO MAINTAIN.
BWKOOM
SO LET'S FINISH THIS LI'L GAME AND I GET WHAT I WANT, EH?

Ah! NOW WE PLAY HIDE-AND-SEEK?
Hmmm!
STEEL REINFORCED DOOR...
...AND A HEAVY DUTY LOCK.
A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE...
...IF YOUR PURSUER WAS NOT A THIEF...
...AND A MUTANT.
PICKING A LOCK WAS NEVER SO EASY.
IF NOT SO SUBTLE!
ARE YOU WAITING IN THE DARK FOR ME, AS-SASINS?
I'M COMING.

THE OCCUPANTS OF THE X-MANSION MOURN THE PASSING OF A THIEF THEY NEVER KNEW.
... AND FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF ONE WHOM THEY CALL THEIR OWN.
HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT, KID.
THERE'S MORE TO THE CAJUN THAN ANY OF US REALLY KNOWS.
I LOVE HIM, WOLVERINE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A TELEPATH TO HAVE FIGURED THAT ONE OUT, DARLIN'.
THIS THING HE'S DOING TONIGHT... HE'S GOT TO DO IT ALONE.
BUT AFTER TONIGHT, DON'T LET HIM BE ALONE AGAIN.
THERE'S SOMETHIN' BETWEEN YOU TWO.
MARIKO AND I HAD THE SAME.
DON'T WANT TO WAIT UNTIL CONDITIONS ARE PERFECT...
...'CAUSE WITH THE LIKES OF US, THEY NEVER ARE.

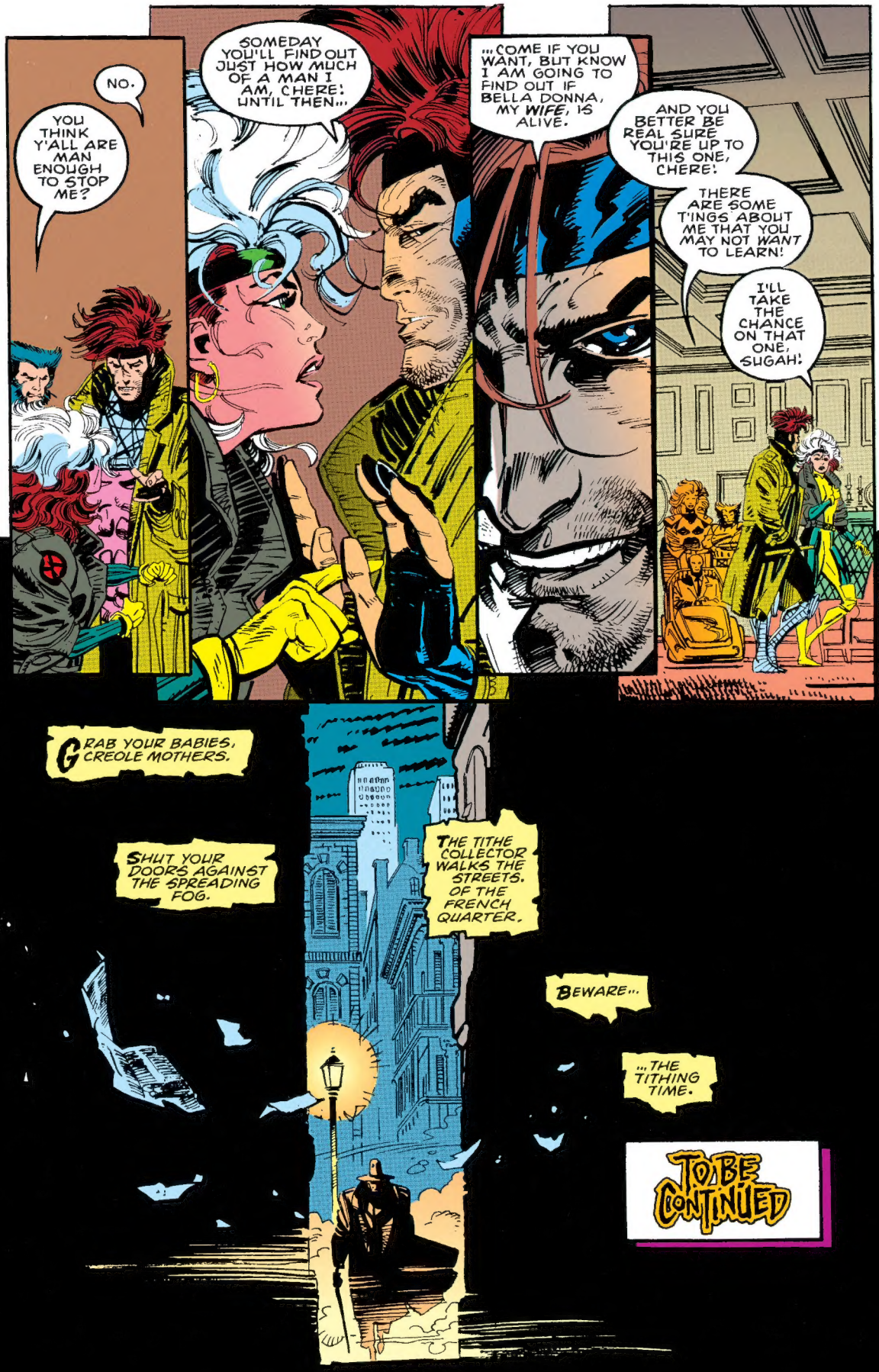
I'M WAITIN'...
WHERE ARE Y'ALL HIDIN', MURDERERS?
YOU GOOD AT KILLIN' FROM A DISTANCE...
...HOW 'BOUT TRYIN' IT UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL?
COWARDS!
VRAP
LOOK HERE... YOU FINALLY DECIDIN' TO CLIMB OUT OF THE DARK PLACES.
FIGURIN' YOU CAN HANDLE ONE THIEF, Eh?
WELL...
...LET THE CARDS FALL WHERE THEY MAY!

KOOM
CARDS WERE NOTHIN' BUT A DIS-TRACTION ...
...I WANT YOU TO SEE EVERYTHING YOU GETTIN' HIT WITH.
YOU'LL KNOW WHERE EVERY BLOW IS COMIN' FROM...
... A CHANCE MY BROTHER NEVER HAD!
COME, KILLERS!
WE'RE NOT DONE YET!

BRAVO, REMY!
YOU STILL FIGHT MORE LIKE AN ASSASSIN THAN A T'IEF!
WHICH ARE YOU?
JULIEN? IT CAN'T BE ... I SAW YOU--
DIE, REMY? BY YOUR SWORD?
WELL, SOMEONE SHOWED ME DEATH DON'T HAVE TO BE FOREVER!
WHAT SAY WE FINISH OUR DUEL, REMY?
NO, JULIEN... IF IT IS TRULY YOU...
...KILLING YOU ONCE WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH.
KLANG
THE SECOND TIME PRESENTS NO CHALLENGE ...
...AND LITTLE PROFIT!
I DON'T KNOW HOW, OR WHY, YOU ARE STILL ALIVE, BUT...
SCHWSH
...THIS IS FOR HENRI!

NO!
YOU WON'T BE STEALIN' MY HONOR AGAIN!
JULIEN --
--DON'T!
LOOKIN' PALE, REMY.
KNOW THAT IT IS ME, YOUR WIFE'S BROTHER!
YOU WON'T BE KILLIN' ME AGAIN, MON AMI! I AM HERE TO STAY!
JULIEN! THE PORTAL IS OPEN...
... LET'S RETURN!
I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO, T'IEF! FOR MY SISTER, REMY.
BELLA DONNA ALMOST DIED BECAUSE OF YOU, BUT I'VE KEPT HER ALIVE.
WE ASSASSINS GOT THE POWER...
...YOU T'IEFS GOT THE LIFE.
IT'S TIME FOR US TO HAVE BOTH!
AND I'LL KILL ALL THE T'IEFS TO GET IT.
FOR MY SISTER. FOR ME. FOR ALL ASSASSINS!
STAY AWAY FROM NEW ORLEANS, T'IEF AND STAY AWAY FROM MY SISTER...
... OR DIE WITH THE REST OF YOUR STINKIN' FAMILY!
BELLA DONNA...
...ALIVE?

LATER...
HOW?
WE ALL SAW HER DIE!*
*X-MEN #8 -- B.H.
WHAT'S GOIN' ON, GAMBIT? FIRST YOUR BROTHER, NOW BELLA DONNA... IS IT ALL TIED IN TO THIS TITHING THING?
CAN'T BE ANSWERIN' THAT YET, PETITE. DON'T KNOW THAT I WOULD IF I COULD.
I'LL BE LEAVING FOR NEW ORLEANS TO GET SOME ANSWERS.
YOU NEED A HAND DOWN THERE, CAJUN...
...I'M ALWAYS UP FOR A ROAD TRIP DOWN TO THE BIG EASY!
THIS T'ING IS FAMILY, LOGAN.
I UNDER-STAND.
WE ARE YOUR FAMILY AS WELL, GAMBIT...
... AND I AM NOT COM-FORTABLE WITH YOUR GOING OFF ON YOUR OWN.
HE WON'T BE TRAVELLIN' SOLO, PROFESSOR!
AH'LL BE WITH HIM ALL THE WAY.


NO.
YOU THINK Y'ALL ARE MAN ENOUGH TO STOP ME?
SOMEDAY YOU'LL FIND OUT JUST HOW MUCH OF A MAN I AM, CHERE! UNTIL THEN...
...COME IF YOU WANT, BUT KNOW I AM GOING TO FIND OUT IF BELLA DONNA, MY WIFE, IS ALIVE.
AND YOU BETTER BE REAL SURE YOU'RE UP TO THIS ONE, CHERE!
THERE ARE SOME T'INGS ABOUT ME THAT YOU MAY NOT WANT TO LEARN!
I'LL TAKE THE CHANCE ON THAT ONE, SUGAH!
GRAB YOUR BABIES, CREOLE MOTHERS.
SHUT YOUR DOORS AGAINST THE SPREADING FOG.
THE TITHE COLLECTOR WALKS THE STREETS. OF THE FRENCH QUARTER.
BEWARE...
...THE TITHING TIME.
TO BE CONTINUED